

# Boonwurrung language

**Boonwurrung** (also anglicised as *Bunurong*, *Bun wurrung*, among other spellings)<sup>[3]</sup> is an indigenous Australian language traditionally spoken by the Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation of Central Victoria prior to European settlement. The last remaining traditional native speakers died in the early 20th century, however there is an active revival movement underway in the Boonwurrung community.

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## Geographic distribution

Boonwurrung was spoken by six clans along the coast from the Werribee River, across the Mornington Peninsula, Western Port Bay to Wilsons Promontory.

## Related languages

Boonwurrung is closely related to the Woiwurrung language, with which it shares over 90% of its vocabulary, and to a lesser degree with Taungurong spoken north of the Great Dividing Range in the area of the Goulburn River. Woiwurrung, Taungurong and Boonwurrung have been considered by linguists to be dialects of a single Central Victorian language, whose range stretched from almost Echuca in the north, to Wilsons Promontory in the south.<sup>[4]</sup>

R. Brough Smyth wrote in 1878 that "*The dialects of the Wooeewoorong or Wawoorong tribe (River Yarra) and the Boonoorong tribe (Coast) are the same. Twenty-three words out of thirty are, making allowances for differences of spelling and pronunciation, identical; five have evidently the same roots, and only two are widely different*".<sup>[5]</sup>

## Placenames derived from Bunwurrung language terms

Boonwurrung	
<b>Native to</b>	Australia
<b>Region</b>	Victoria
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Boon wurrung (Yalukit)
<b>Language family</b>	<div>Pama–Nyungan<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kulinic<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kulin<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wuy-wurrung<sup>[1]</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Boonwurrung</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></div>
Language codes	
<b>ISO 639-3</b>	<i>None</i> (mis)
<b>Glottolog</b>	<i>None</i>
<b>AIATSIS</b> <sup>[2]</sup>	S35 ( <span>https://collecti on.aiatsis.gov.au/aus tlang/language/S35</span> )

Placename	Origin
<u>Allambee</u>	Reported to mean "to sit and wait for a while", <sup>[6]</sup> possibly from the verb <i>ngalamba</i> .
<u>Beenak</u>	Basket.
<u>Buln Buln</u>	"Lyrebird", same origin as the name of the Melbourne suburb <u>Bulleen</u> . <sup>[7]</sup>
<u>Bunyip</u>	From the mythical water-dwelling beast, the <u>bunyip</u> .
<u>Corinella</u>	Unclear, some sources state "Running Water" <sup>[8]</sup> whereas others claim "Home of the kangaroo" <sup>[9]</sup>
<u>Dandenong</u>	Possibly derived from <i>Tanjenong</i> , the indigenous name of <u>Dandenong Creek</u> . <sup>[10]</sup>
<u>Darnum</u>	Debated, some sources claim "Parrot", referring specifically to the <u>crimson rosella</u> . However, other sources claim this to be folk etymology. <sup>[11]</sup> The name <i>Datnum</i> is recorded as the name of the parrot spirit who assisted <u>Bunjil</u> , one of six <i>wirmums</i> or shamans in Kulin mythology.
<u>Dumbalk</u>	"Ice" or "Winter"
<u>Eumemmerring</u>	Claimed to be a word meaning "agreement", <sup>[12]</sup> early settler reports recorded "um um" as a word for "yes".
<u>Korumburra</u>	Thought to mean "Blowfly", <sup>[13]</sup> recorded as <i>karrakarrak</i> in related languages.
<u>Koo Wee Rup</u>	Blackfish
<u>Koonwarra</u>	<u>Black swan</u>
<u>Lang Lang</u>	Unclear, may be connected to <i>Laang</i> meaning stony, although other sources claim the name derives from a different word meaning a group of trees, or from an early European settler named Lang.
<u>Leongatha</u>	From <i>liang</i> , meaning "teeth".
<u>Meeniyan</u>	Moon
<u>Moorabbin</u>	Unclear, possibly "woman's milk". Other sources state "resting place", <sup>[14]</sup> or "people of the flat country". <sup>[15]</sup>
<u>Moorooduc</u>	Unclear, some sources claim "flat swamp", others claim "dark" or "night".
<u>Mordialloc</u>	From <i>Moordy Yallock</i> . Yallock means creek or river, in reference to the Mordialloc Creek estuary. Some sources give "moordy" as meaning "small", whereas other sources have given it to mean "swamp". <sup>[16]</sup>
<u>Murrumbeena</u>	Unclear, according to some sources named after a member of the native police. Identical with the word <i>Murrumbeena</i> recorded by Daniel Bunce in 1851 as meaning "you". <sup>[17]</sup>
<u>Nar Nar Goon</u>	Unclear, said to be from a word for koala.
<u>Narre Warren</u>	Unclear, some sources allege connection to <i>nier warreen</i> meaning "no good water", although warreen usually refers to the sea. Other sources cite connection to <i>narrworing</i> , meaning "hot".
<u>Nayook</u>	From the word "ngayuk" meaning cockatoo.
<u>Neerim</u>	High or long.
<u>Noojee</u>	Often described as "place of rest", apparently literally means "done", "finished" or "complete".
<u>Nyora</u>	<u>Native Cherry</u>
<u>Tarwin</u>	From <i>dharwin</i> meaning "thirsty"
<u>Tonimbuk</u>	From the verb meaning "to burn".
<u>Tooradin</u>	Named from a monster of local legend, which lived in the waters of Sawtell Inlet.
<u>Warneet</u>	One of the words for "river".
<u>Warragul</u>	Usually given as meaning "wild dog", although <i>warragul</i> was recorded as meaning "wild" for anything, including humans.

Wonthaggi	Thought to be from the verb <i>wanthatji</i> meaning "get", "bring" or "pull". Other sources claim it means "home".
Yannathan	A form of the verb <i>yana</i> meaning "to go" or "to walk".
Yarragon	Thought to be short for <i>Yarragondock</i> , meaning moustaches. <sup>[18]</sup>

## References

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2. S35 (<https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/S35>) Boonwurrung at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
3. Other spellings and names include *Boonerwung*, *Boon Wurrung*, *Putnaroo*, *Thurung*, *Toturin*, and *Gippsland dialect* (AusAnthrop Australian Aboriginal tribal database, *Detailed record of the Bunurong* ([http://www.ausanthrop.net/resources/ausanthrop\\_db/detail.php?id\\_search=65](http://www.ausanthrop.net/resources/ausanthrop_db/detail.php?id_search=65)) Archived ([https://web.archive.org/web/20100707022245/http://www.ausanthrop.net/resources/ausanthrop\\_db/detail.php?id\\_search=65](https://web.archive.org/web/20100707022245/http://www.ausanthrop.net/resources/ausanthrop_db/detail.php?id_search=65)) July 7, 2010, at the Wayback Machine, AusAnthrop anthropological research, resources and documentation on the Aborigines of Australia. Retrieved May 30, 2012)
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6. Allambee at Victorian Places (<http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/allambee>)
7. [1] (<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/the-az-story-of-melbournes-suburbs/news-story/6f7611b7df20e55ad02f5e9615885e21>)
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10. [3] (<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/the-az-story-of-melbournes-suburbs/news-story/6f7611b7df20e55ad02f5e9615885e21>)
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12. [4] (<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/the-az-story-of-melbournes-suburbs/news-story/6f7611b7df20e55ad02f5e9615885e21>)
13. [5] (<http://profile.id.com.au/south-gippsland/about?WebID=100>)
14. Moorabbin becomes a city (<http://localhistory.kingston.vic.gov.au/htm/article/230.htm>)
15. [The Argus Newspaper, 12 Feb 1938, page 19]
16. [The Argus Newspaper, 12 Feb 1938, page 19]
17. [Language of the Aborigines of the Colony of Victoria and other Australian Districts, Daniel Bunce 1856]
18. Yarragon at Victorian Places (<http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/yarragon>)

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